April 18, 1946

My dear Mr. Doniger:

I am sorry I cannot give you permission to write a play about my husband. All of my husband's affairs are in the hands of the executors of his estate.

I agree that a play about my husband's ideals would be good but we like Mr. Robert Sherwood's idea and hope he will do a play sometime.

Very sincerely yours,
Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
Leverly Wilshire Hotel
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

You may recall me as the co-author of "Father Was President," the play about Theodore Roosevelt. When Bob Porterfield was out here, he told me you had asked what had happened to the play.

"Father Was President" is now going to be put on by Paramount Studios here in Los Angeles before being taken to New York. Albert Dekker, the motion picture actor, wants to play T.R. We think it's a rather good choice since he made excellent use of his dramatic talents and democratic beliefs as California State Assemblyman. Now in reversal we hope his political ability will buttress his acting talent in the role of Theodore Roosevelt.

Of course, Dekker is a Democrat so the switch to playing a Republican may be a little difficult.

As I hope was evident in the play, I tried to write a work which would make some political-social contribution in a palatable form. I would like my writing to continue doing this. That is why I most strongly desire to do a play which would concern itself with the life of you and Franklin Roosevelt in the White House. I sincerely believe that you are two people who have offered the world the best solutions we have been given thus far. I feel that a presentation of the ideals that motivated Mr. Roosevelt and yourself through the telling of your story will lead to -- in those who see such a presentation -- an inevitable extension of those same ideals.

Therefore I am asking for your permission to write such a play.

If you would like to discuss this with me before coming to any decision, of course I would be only too glad.

I fully realize that a project of this importance may take two or even more years to complete. Nevertheless, even after securing your permission, any work I did up to and including the finished play itself, would be completely subject to your approval.

In any case, whatever your decision as far as I am concerned, I feel that the story of two people who believed in the inherent dignity of every human being should be told.

Sincerely,

Walter Doniger

Walter Doniger